

The Order of Nine Angles in Contemporary Academic Discourse

A Concise Overview

Until 2009 the treatment, by established academics and post-graduate students, of the modern satanist group the Order of Nine Angles (ONA/O9A) was cursory at best (a few paragraphs or a few pages) and sometimes bordering on the ill-informed. For example, in the 2006 *Encyclopedic Sourcebook of Satanism* edited by James R. Lewis and Jesper Petersen, the Church of Satan, described as 'the founding form' of modern satanism is – together with the Temple of Set – given extensive coverage, with the O9A relegated to a few paragraphs – "the Order of the Nine Angles (ONA) is a secretive British Satanist group that acquired notoriety by openly advocating culling, namely human sacrifice..." – and dismissed as being merely the 'intended most sinister form of satanism today'. In others works - such as the 1998 book *The Emergence of a Euro-American Radical Right* by Kaplan and Weinberg, and the 1995 article by Harvey entitled "Satanism in Britain Today" in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* - personal opinions about the O9A are stated as if they were fact; as for instance regarding the claims made about O9A membership, with no evidence presented in either case in support of such claims. {1}

In the more extensive coverage by Goodrick-Clarke in his 2002 book *Black Sun*, the author concentrated on the O9A as an exponent of 'nazi satanism', even though several 1980s O9A MSS and the 1992 *Satanic Letters of Stephen Brown* explained that the O9A regarded politics as simply an exoteric 'causal form' that might be used as part of an aeonic 'sinister dialectic'. In addition, Goodrick-Clarke's survey of the O9A is replete with factual errors. For instance he gives the wrong date for Myatt's year of birth, the wrong date for Myatt joining Colin Jordan's neo-nazi group, and the wrong length of time for two of Myatt's terms of imprisonment.

Given such a cursory treatment of and a sometimes ill-informed view of the O9A by academics, it is no surprise that the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set were extensively written about, with the writings of LaVey and Aquino extensively analysed and commented upon. For example, five chapters of the 2012 book *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity* are devoted to LaVey and his writings, with it being claimed that "the undoubtedly most important and influential Satanist group is the Church of Satan" {2} even though LaVey himself stated (and it is easy to prove) that his satanism was merely "Ayan Rand with trappings," and, more importantly, even though his satanism failed to meet most of the criteria specified by the complete Oxford English Dictionary {3} in the definitions of the words Satanic and Satanism {4}, a failing which has yet to be addressed in the contemporary academic discourse about modern satanism, focusing as such discourse hitherto has done on (a) satanism as some sort of modern sub-culture (claimed as the invention of LaVey) involving a 'self-spirituality' and/or as representing a particular 'humanist psychology', and on

(b) something termed 'post-satanism' where self-styled satanists are apprehended in terms of a broader Left Hand Path (LHP) milieu itself defined in terms of the likes of Crowley and Aquino and the qabalistic-indebted Western occultism invented by the Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn and Blavatsky.

In 2009, however, the O9A was the subject of two papers read at a conference entitled *Satanism in the Modern World* held at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, with a revised and updated version of the paper by Senholt forming a chapter of the 2012 book *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity* {5}; while in 2013, the O9A was the subject of a chapter in the book *Mysticism in the 21st Century* by Professor Connell Monette of Al Akhawayn University, Morocco {6}.

The work of Senholt and Monette in particular enable a better appreciation of the Order of Nine Angles, especially in the context of satanism and modern occultism, with Senholt, for instance and importantly, stating the the O9A represent a 'sinister tradition' quite distinct from existing LHP and satanic groups, and with Monette arguing that the O9A is a fascinating blend of "pagan and sinister hermetic currents". Monette also regards the satanism of the O9A as mostly cosmetic, asserting that the O9A is actually syncretic and pagan and owes far more to older Hellenic, and non-Western esoteric, traditions that it does to the modern qabalistic-indebted Western occultism of Crowley, LaVey, and Aquino; an assertion regarding older roots, un-linked to that modern occultism, which the O9A has long claimed, and which has been the subject of some interesting and recent O9A articles {7} but which other contemporary academic discourses, mentioning the O9A, have avoided, possibly because their authors were unaware of them, were more concerned with assertions regarding the apparently 'overwhelming importance and influence' of the likes of Crowley, LaVey, Aquino, and with claiming that the O9A is merely a minor part of some submilieu of the contemporary LHP/satanic milieu established by such individuals.

Thus, welcome as the work of Senholt and Monette is - despite its limitations and the occasional factual error {8} - in pointing out the distinctiveness of the O9A tradition, it is only a beginning. For it does not address the four things about the Order of Nine Angles which should be addressed if contemporary academic discourses regarding esotericism are to get beyond unscholarly claims regarding Crowley, LaVey, Aquino, et al, and modern occultism in general and satanism in particular.

First, and apropos the work of Monette, the ancient hermetic roots of the O9A. For Myatt's recently published translation of and commentary on the Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum {9} provides a direct link between ancient Greek Hermeticism and not only the O9A's septenary system but also its ontology of causal and acausal. As I noted in my essay *Anton Long and The Exeatic Quest for Gnosis*, a lot of what Anton Long has written

"is (i) a modern restatement of the hermetic septenary *anados* - of the quest for gnosis - evident in the ancient Greek text that forms the Pymander section of the Corpus Hermeticum; (ii) a modern praxis established to achieve that gnosis; and (iii) a modern, and rational, understanding of gnosis in terms of *sans denotatum*, of causal and acausal (and not of gods or of God) and of what such a gnosis may mean, which is of a possible acausal, immortal, existence beyond the realm of the causal."

Second, it is the esoteric philosophy of Anton Long, as outlined for instance in essays such as *The Esoteric Philosophy Of The Order Of Nine Angles - An Introduction*, that should, academically, be discussed, analysed, and commented upon, and not some group called 'the order of nine angles'. For as the O9A have been at pains to point out, the 'order of nine angles' it is not really like other occult groups (ancient and modern) being as it is only (a) the occult philosophy of Anton Long; (b) those who use or who apply that philosophy (in whole or in part) in their own lives, via one of the three praxes described by Anton Long ; and (c) those who are influenced or who have been influenced by that philosophy, or those praxes, in whole or in part.

Third, the historical evidence regarding the septenary system used by the O9A, which system the O9A has always claimed is an 'authentic' Western one, but which Senholt et al have dismissed as merely "a replacement for the Kabbalah [...] a non-Semitic version of the Kabbalistic Sepherot" {10}. Evidence such a from Western alchemy {11}.

Fourth, the sinisterly-numinous, and essentially pagan, nature of the O9A's Seven Fold Way, with its emphasis on pathei-mathos both exoteric and esoteric, and with its "dangerous and extreme form of Satanism" {12} not its raison d'etre but just a necessary and novitiate pathei-mathos, a modern 'rite of passage', and thus a type of 'insight role'. {13}

That the practical, distinct, esoteric, adversarial, philosophy of the O9A - with its ontology, epistemology, and theory of ethics, and its roots in a Hellenic hermeticism (and possibly in Arabic, Indic, and Persian, sources) thousands of years old - has not been mentioned, let alone discussed, analysed, and commented upon, in academic discourses is certainly indicative of how such discourse is and has been focused on assumptions regarding the 'importance of LaVey' and on a Left Hand Path defined in terms of the likes of Crowley and Aquino and a qabalistic-indebted Western occultism invented a mere century or so ago.

Furthermore, despite the recent and unfortunate tendency by some to describe as a scholar anyone who works in academia and who has had peer-reviewed papers and/or books published, the term scholar really should be reserved for those who have a profound knowledge of a particular speciality acquired through several years of meticulous study using primary source material. Thus

a scholarly study of the O9A would certainly involve (i) acquiring a detailed knowledge and understanding of the whole O9A corpus, written by Anton Long between the 1970s and 2012, (ii) a knowledge of O9A aural tradition, and (iii) a factual knowledge of the life of 'Anton Long', some of which knowledge could be acquired by interviewing Anton Long himself. Given that no academic who has so far written about the O9A has even a detailed knowledge of the whole corpus - as is evident from, for example, the lack of studies into The Star Game, Esoteric Chant, the hermetic and alchemical antecedents of the Seven Fold Way and the septenary system, and the life of 'Anton Long' as a metaphor for the sinisterly-numinous tradition - then the work done to date really does not merit the appellation scholarly.

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Notes

{1} In this overview, books and articles by journalists - such as *Lucifer Rising* by Baddeley, published in the 1990s - are ignored, given their bias, political or personal, and their lack of research. For instance, Baddeley was, on his own admission, an 'ordained priest' of the Church of Satan, and relied on (and seemed to take as gospel) an interview given by a then inexperienced novice associated with the O9A whose knowledge of occultism in general and the O9A in particular was quite limited. In addition, he used journalistic tactics in order to present his personal opinion about the O9A as fact, writing for example that "most occultists consider..." without giving any sources and without providing any information concerning who those alleged occultists were, what their knowledge of occultism and of the O9A was, and when and where they made such statements about the O9A.

{2} Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen (editors). *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012. p.6

{3} 20 volumes, 2nd edition, Oxford, 1989

{4} See Anton Long. *Toward Understanding Satanism*, dated 122 yfayen. As Anton Long notes in that text,

"What is lacking [...] are the following standard attributes of Satanism, of the diabolical, and of the Satanic:
(a) practising or disposed to practise evil;
(b) actually or potentially harmful, destructive, disastrous, or pernicious; baleful;
(c) malicious; mischievous, sly;
(d) bad in moral character, disposition

(e) hard, difficult, misleading, deadly, amoral."

Anton Long goes on to argue that, of all groups describing themselves as satanist, only the Order of Nine Angles correctly merits the description satanist given that it is the only one to actively promote and incite what is "actually or potentially harmful, destructive, evil, disastrous, pernicious; baleful; malicious; mischievous, sly," and given that it is "bad in moral character, disposition; hard, difficult, misleading, deadly, amoral."

Understood thus, the satanism of the O9A not only pre-dates the 'satanism' of LaVey, but is obviously adversarial and heretical in nature, with Anton Long, for example, stating in his polemical essay *ONA Style, O9A Chic*: "That we in the text *Toward Understanding Satanism* use the standard definitions of Satanism and the Satanic, as given in the complete Oxford English Dictionary, to differentiate ourselves from others who claim to represent Satanism - and who claim to be Satanic - is deliberate, although it is only to be expected that (a) only a few will understand why, and (c) many or most will regard it as confirming what they in their delusion believe in, and accept about both themselves and us."

{5} Jacob Senholt. *Secret Identities In The Sinister Tradition*, in *The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012. pp. 250-274

{6} Connell Monette. *Mysticism in the 21st Century*. Sirius Academic Press, 2013. ISBN 978-1940964003. A draft copy of the second edition of the chapter on the O9A (due for publication in 2015/2016) is available here - <https://omega9alpha.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/o9a-monette-second-edition-v3.pdf>

{7} Among such articles are (i) *A Comparison And A Brief Study of The Meaning of The Nine Angles* (2013); (ii) *Roots and Organization of the Order of Nine Angles* (2013); (iii) *Hebdomadry - Exeatic Way of The Order of Nine Angles*.

See also the articles mentioned in footnotes {11} and {13} below.

{8} One error was the mention by Monette of a so-called 'outer representative' being recently appointed. As Anton Long explained in his *Those Who Are Our Kind*, the 'outer representative' was a ploy, a jape, part of the O9A's Labyrinthos Mythologicus.

To his credit, in the second edition of his book Monette has corrected the error.

{9} David Myatt. *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander*. 2013. ISBN 978-1491249543

{10} Senholt, op. cit., p.253

{11} Regarding ancient alchemical parallels for a septenary system, see the

following articles: (i) *Alchemy And The Sinisterly-Numinous Tradition*, (ii) *Lapis Philosophicus, Isaac Newton, And The Septenary System*, and (iii) *The Hermetic Origins Of The O9A* (pdf).

{12} Faxneld, Per. *Post-Satanism, Left-Hand Paths, and Beyond: Visiting the Margins*. The Devil's Party: Satanism in Modernity. Per Faxneld and Jesper Aagaard Petersen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. pp. 205-208

{13} Some of the recent articles which deal with the pagan, and the sinister-numinous, nature of the O9A, are: (i) *The Pagan Mysticism Of The O9A*, (ii) *The Sinisterly-Numinous O9A*, and (iii) *O9A Esotericism, An Initiated Apprehension*.
